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#### BEHEMOTH

● Peru: In summer 1997, the Peruvian navy was searching for a 40 m giant serpent in the Amazon River which resembled the Loch Ness Monster. (Focus, German news magazine, 35/1997, 25 August 1997, p. 226) Sorry, but I have no further details.

● Lake Van, Turkey: As discussed in the last Bilk, CNN on their internet page of June 12, 1997 had a "bad quality amateur picture" of the local monster. Andreas Trottmann has sent me this movie on computer disc. The video sequence consists of three parts, all evidently taken on different times of day, in different weather and with different surface conditions. As I understood it, they were supposed to come from one video. This is evidently not the case. Each clip is only seconds long. Clip one shows what can be easily recognized as the wake of a motor boat. Clip three shows a rock in shallow water close to the shore. On two occasions, the thin silver line of a long wave slowly approaching the shore can be seen, and in the wave valley pebbles to the left of the "hump" can be made out - it is, in other words, a stone which only appears to dive and surface due to wave motion. The middle part is the hard to explain conventionally. It shows a dark, slightly fin-like object surface in rough waves, move quickly to the left, then, some distance to the right, there is some splashing (a tail?). The triangular hump or object is too solid and stands too high to be a wave effect. It either is a monster's back or some object (a log, a barrel or something simliar?) towed by a boat which is outside the frame. If the sequences come, as claimed, from one video purpoiting to show one sighting of the Lake Van monster, then the whole affair is a hoax. If these are three seperate videos, two are conveniently explained, but one must remain unexplained.

o Bibliography: \* Karl Shuker on Lake Brosno, Russia; Lochs Ness, Morar and Lochy; Lake Storsjo and Amazon River in Strange 18, p. 24-25 \* sighting of the Flathead Monster in October 1996 and a wave of sightings in 1993, in Strange 18, p. 40 \* A good "Lake Monster Status" report in Fortean Times 102 \* A 70 cm iguana was caught by police in the evening of 24 September 1997 in Munich, Germany. (Süddeutsche Zeitung 26 September 1997, p. 16)

#### ISIS

● Bipedia # 15, September 1997: This is the first time for some years that de Sarre has managed to publish two issues of Bipedia within a year, regretablely, there is still too much ancient astronaut speculation by some inept German authors. However, Carlos Bonet's study on Lovecraft's amphibians ("Interpretación socio-politica de la 'Sombra sobre Innsmouth' de Lovecraft" is very good. Issue 15 also includes Francois de Sarre's "About Early Water Stages in Humanity: A Comparison between Aquatic Ape Theory and the Initial Bipedalism Theory", which says where he disagrees with A. Hardy. I support Bipedia, even if I find it is somewhat too open minded at the moment (it was meant to be scientific in the beginning), and so should you. Infos: CERBI - 32, Avenue de Buenos-Ayres - 06000 Nice - France.

● Bibliography: \* lizard people underneath Los Angeles: Strange 18, p. 39

#### LEVIATHAN

● Solaro, Corsica: This was reported as a UFO and described as such in the "Journal für UFO-Forschung" 4/1997, p. 124-125. Mr Axel F, while on holiday in Corsica in July 1994, on one evening saw "from the beach about 1 to 2 metres high and about 15 metres

away strange lights over the sea. It were 8 to 12 triangles of equal size, with a baseline of 50 cm and a height of 1 metre.... They had different luminosities. They were constantly in motion like musical keys in different octaves." Funny description, but could well be interpreted as a multi-finned sea serpent against marine bioluminescence. Heuvelmans had a similar case off Madagascar, since identified as marine lightwheel. Did Axel F see a school of dolphins, or what?

● Bahamas: Diver Brian Skerry was looking for sharks but he encountered an oarfish - the first ever photographed sighting of this mysterious creature. "It was very strange", said Skerry. The fish had a comb-like structure on the head, on both sides were structures like antennae. The fish was 10 ft long and 10 cm wide. It stood motionless and vertical in the water. Only the dorsal fin moved. When Skerry neared carefully, the fish erected its comb and dove down quickly into the sea. Skerry's picture is in Focus, 37/1997, 8. September 1997, p. 184. Oarfish have been quoted as possible contenders for sea serpent sightings, this observation rules that out. Additional information: Fortean Times 102, p. 17

● Baja California, Mexico: In a letter-to-the editor in Focus 40/1997 (29 September 1997, p. 384) Adolf and Brigitte Sommer of Wörthsee reported their own encounter with an oarfish. After a stormy night in February 1996 they found a 4 metre fish at the southern tip of Baja California. The fish was still alive, and the local fishermen, who had never before seen such an animal, approached it with fear and caution. Finally, they hung the creature on a scaffolding used for hanging large fish. The creature broke into three pieces, probably because it was too heavy. Adolf and Brigitte Sommer found "it had no bones". Only after seeing the photo of the Bahama oarfish they realised that this was what they had found. This is no tall tale, they supplied a colour photo which definitely shows they found an oarfish! By the way, Focus constantly refers to the oarfish as "Bandfisch" when in fact the German name is "Riemenfisch".

● Bibliography: \* Megamouth shark captures: Strange 18, p. 52 \* Early in September 1997, a leatherback turtle was caught in a fisherman's net at Miramar Beach, Gaia, northern Portugal. A large photo accompanies the note in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 11 September 1997, p. 14. The turtle appears to be as large as some kids playing with it, I should guess it was about 3 ft in length.

#### KRAKEN

● Strange squids ex nihilo in toxic waste: Strange 18, p. 28.

#### CRYPTOZOLOGY

● The fun quote for this issue comes from Karl Shuker who says in Strange 18 that in "blatent disregard" of cryptozoology skeptics new animals are being discovered every year. It would certainly convince skeptics if cryptozoology discovered only one of the 200 creatures it so stubbornly believes in. The large number of animals discovered each year - none of which has ever been predicted by cryptozoologists - actually argues against this "science". It is no wonder that a previously unexplored area in Vietnam houses many animals hitherto unknown - but how can any creature like Nessie, Bigfoot, Big Bird or the multitude of primitive whales cryptozoologist believe in exist in areas so well explored? Why are they not found? It needs more than unknown animals that appear unexpectedly in far-away places to convince me that cryptozoology is not more than a silly pastime. ISC - produce one animal you predicted and I apologise!

● Mixed Bag: \* The best source for unusual cryptozoological information remains the "Weekly World News". The "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 26 November 1996, p. 18, has a short piece detailing such amazing facts as photos of angels and insects from Mars. \*

New microorganisms have been discovered by the submarine "Alvin" on the ocean floor. The creatures live in hot springs. (Spiegel 3 March 1997, p. 227) \* Recently there came the news that the thylacine has been "rediscovered" on Irian Jaya, the part of New Guinea occupied by Indonesia. An additional report was in the "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 20 August 1997, p. 2 and 10: For one month, farmers of Jayawijaya province have reported pigs and goats that have allegedly been killed by thylacines. The local government offers rewards of two million rupias (said to equal 690 \$) for a captured thylacine, Antara reports. Before cryptozoologist get too enthusiastic, they should remember this is the second "confirmation" of thylacine existence in New Guinea within this year, yet without proof, and similar claims have been made in Australia and Tasmania from time to time. Sadly, the thylacine remains extinct. I hope my scepticism is not justified. \* Only a few years after its discovery, the tiny frog Rheobatrachus silus is thought to be extinct. It was first found in 1972 in Queensland, Australia, but for several years it has not been sighted. The frog is the only animal species that breeds its young in the stomach of the mother! (Frankfurter Rundschau, 26 July 1997, p. 6) \* The American biologist Charles Fisher (a telling name!) has discovered a strange new species of worms 700 metres down on the floor of the Gulf of Mexico off New Orleans. The creatures live in tiny multigonal holes in a layer of methane ice and may feed on bacteria that live on methane. The worms are 2 to 5 cm long and have a rosé skin with white hair. (Focus 34/1997, p. 128)

● Darwinism: There have been several discoveries recently which question the silly theory of Darwinism (not the fact of evolution itself, but the alleged survival of the fittest and other outdated 19th century propaganda). Michael Richardson of St. George's Hospital (London?) has found that the famous textbook illustrations of "ontogenesis repeating phylogenesis" by Ernst Haeckel (founder of social Darwinism) were faked. Haeckel claimed in 1866 that he had discovered a "biogenetic basic law": that the development of the embryo repeats evolution: therefore, a human embryo resembles a fish at first, then a reptile, at last an ape-like creature. Richardson was able to show, by collecting specimens, that Haeckel just imagined his drawings! (Badische Neueste Nachrichten, 12 August 1997; Focus 34/1997, p. 128) Haeckel's lies were a breakthrough for darwinism and they have never been questioned by biologists. This revelation should (let's hope it) shake biology, but it also questions some alternative biology, such as Francois de Sarre's initial bipedalism, which uses Haeckel's law as an argument.

#### USO

● Spain: On February 2, 1988, Spanish fishermen observed "six luminous spheres" emerge from the sea off Casablanca, Morocco. A night of sightings all over Spain followed, some witnesses saw balls of light dive into bodies of water, for example at Osera de Ebro, Valencia and the Gabriel y Galán reservoir in Cáceres. (report by Rubia-Munoz, INFO Journal 77, p. 35-36) The Spanish cases mostly sound like bolides, which, being at a high altitude, can be seen from many places in a large area, although to the witnesses they always appear to crash close by (in reality they just disappear below the horizon). That cannot explain the Casablanca case. I'd like to know more about it. Was this sighting reported independently of the other ones, or is it a fabrication? The case is fascinating and may be related to similar light displays, which have themselves been linked to the "lightwheel"-phenomenon.

#### REVIEW - ELLIS: SEEUNGEHEUER

● Ellis' books have always fascinated me, but his new one on sea monsters is a bit of a disappointment. Ellis relies too heavily on academic cryptozoology, but simply because some cryptozoologists



work at universities doesn't automatically mean that they have enough common sense to judge cryptozoological enigmas (f.e. LeBlond, who "proofed" the surgeon's photo showed a big unknown beast by analysing the wave pattern. We now know that the picture shows a small modell). Anyway, LeBlond's ridiculous claim that the shark spine recovered from a whale's stomach at British Columbia is an unknown big reptile he equates with Caddy is taken seriously by Ellis! Ellis is good, very good indeed, when he describes real animals. The chapters on giant squids, octopi and sirenians are excellent and thrilling. However, his writing on sea monsters is unconvincing, confused, full of errors (most of the pictures are attributed to sources they do not come from, and 19th century steelcuts are referred to as renaissance woodcuts! Horror!) and very naive - he even repeats the old and silly notion that mermaid sightings are due to manati, a statement so blatantly false it doesn't gain from being repeated ad nauseam (seals, small whales, otters, expectation etc all are origins of mermaid sightings, and mermaids were a well established fact of the north European fauna long before the manati had even been discovered). Ellis struggles to present a scientific view of sea monsters and fails miserably, yet I still recommend the book for the fascinating sections on real animals. Don't read the rest. (Birkhäuser, Basle, ISBN 3-7643-5422-4, 58 German Marks, 388 p.)

#### MARINE FORTEANA

● \* Fifty years ago was the dramatic journey of Heyerdahl's Kon Tiki raft (Neue Zürcher Zeitung 26 April 1997, p. 48) \* Well, don't know how to classify this. It is important and Charles Fort, who imagined islands of ice in the sky, was completely right! As "New Scientist" reported in May 1997, giant ice cubes orbit the earth and routinely enter our atmosphere, according to Louis Frank of the University of Iowa. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 30 May 1997, p. 12; many other papers)

#### LOST LANDS

● The delta of the Nile slowly sinks into the Mediterranean Sea. One expert from the Smithsonian calculated a dramatic rate of 5 millimetres per year, which sounds small, but means 30 km of lost land until the end of the next century. (Süddeutsche Zeitung 25 July 1997, p. 12) Whenever some ruins are found at the bottom of the sea, like cart ruts in Malta or the pyramids of Rock Lake, Atlantis fanatics date these remains to the end of the last glaciation. These slow processes, however, explain the data just as well.

#### DINOSAURS

● For years, Oviraptor was thought to be an egg thief. New finds show that the eggs were her own, and mama did not eat, but protect them. Dinos surely changed their image recently, despite being depicted as monster killers by Spielberg. (The Times, 16 May 1997, p. 8)  
● Near Lourinha north of Lisbon in Portugal, a French-Portuguese research team discovered dinosaur eggs including embryos, reports "Publico". They found dozens of eggs from carnivorous dinos, each 13 cm long, with a diameter of 8 cm. (AFP, Rheinpfalz 23 June 1997)

#### MARINE LIFE

● A large school of whales stranded at New Zealand, and despite brave attempts by resuers, many of the poor creatures died. (Badisches Tagblatt, Badische Neueste Nachrichten, both 10 October 1997). We're nearing Christmas again, the usual time for whale strandings both on the northern and southern hemisphere.